

NATURAL VS. HUMAN CAUSED DISASTERS

A disaster is usually defined as an event that involves destruction of property, includes injury and/or loss of life, affects a large population and is shared by many families.

Human-caused disasters include malfunctioning technology, airplane crashes, some forest fires, mass transportation accidents and dissemination of environmental toxins. Responsible parties to these issues can be individual people, businesses or the government.

	Natural	Human-Caused
Causes	Forces of nature	Human error, malfunctioning technology
Examples	Earthquakes, hurricanes, floods	Airplane crashes, major chemical leaks, nuclear reactor accidents
Blame	No one	Person, government, business
Scope	Various locations	Locations may be inaccessible to rescuers, unfamiliar to survivors, little advance warning
Post disaster distress	High	Higher, often felt by family members not involved in actual disaster

THE EFFECTS OF A DISASTER ON A COMMUNITY

- Destruction of infrastructure
- Absence of electricity, sanitation and potable water
- Destruction of physical contact with the outside world (phone lines out, destroyed roadways)
- Strained community relations
- Media sensationalism
- Death or physical injury to family members
- Loss of family dwellings or possessions
- Job loss
- Parental disorganization and dysfunction

EFFECTS OF DISASTER

- Disruption of normal patterns
- Somatic symptoms
- Aggressive/Defiant Behavior
- Repetitious Behavior
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Guilt
- Acute Stress Reactions

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- Listening and emphasizing strengths
- Screening Techniques
- Determining Need and Type of Intervention
- Know limitations

**Kentucky Community Crisis
Response Board**

Supporting Communities in Crisis
Management: Preparedness,
Response and Ongoing Recovery

**ISSUES FOR COMMUNITY
INVOLVEMENT**

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

One important task for the primary care physician is to help the community implement a disaster preparedness program prior to the disaster.

SCHOOLS

After a disaster, the schools are a natural site for monitoring behavior of children and adolescents, even early in the aftermath, when schools are often used as temporary shelters for families.

MEDIA

Mass media can be effective in informing the public about the status of a disaster, e.g., where and how to get emergency services.

**COMMUNITY AGENCIES AND
RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS**

Outreach to various community organizations and relief groups, churches and synagogues about the health and psychosocial effects of a disaster on children and adolescents will assist in long term recovery.



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<http://www.state.ky.us/agencies/military/kccrb>

Toll Free 24 Hour Line:
(888) 522-7228

An office of the Kentucky
Department of Military Affairs

**HELPING THE
COMMUNITY
HEAL**

Health Care & Human
Services Role in Recovery



*Information in this brochure was
taken from a Center for Mental
Health Services publication entitled
"Psychosocial Issues for Children
and Families in Disasters: A Guide
for the Primary Care Physician"*

